



RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY

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Context

Preamble Status of the School - Voluntary Controlled Church of England School.

Type of School - Lower School, catering for children in the last year of the Early Years Foundation Stage, in Key Stage One and the first two years of Key Stage Two.

The Legal Position of Religious Education

Silsoe VC Lower School is a Voluntary Controlled Church of England School. This means that the teaching of RE is given significant importance. As a school we have adopted the Central Bedfordshire Agreed Syllabus for RE (2018) and this is taught in each class by the class teachers from Reception to Year Four.

Our school curriculum for RE meets the requirements of the 1998 School Standards and Framework Act (SSFA). This stipulates that RE is compulsory for all children registered at Silsoe VC Lower School. The SSFA allows parents to withdraw their child from RE lessons if they so wish, although this should only be done once the parents have given written notice to the school. It is hoped that the aims of RE are understood by the whole school community and that RE is seen as relevant for all pupils in the school.

Vision and Values

In 2019 the governors, senior leaders, staff and children developed Silsoe VC Lower School's vision and values. We agreed this vision with a specific aim to further develop and strengthen the distinctive Christian character of our school.

“Our vision is to be an excellent, God-centred, values-based, community-focused school where everyone is welcomed, encouraged and included. Our children will develop as creative, determined learners and responsible citizens inspired to achieve their God-given potential and live life in all its fullness. We will foster understanding, tolerance and forgiveness within our caring Christian community.”

This vision is embedded and developed through whole school worship, through our RE curriculum and through the wider curriculum taught and modelled at the school.

Rationale

At Silsoe VC Lower School we recognise and value the religious backgrounds and non-religious backgrounds of each of all of our pupils. We intend to be sensitive to the home background of all and therefore work to ensure that RE is accessible to all pupils and adults of any religious persuasion or none. We believe that RE should contribute to the development of pupils as individuals and members of society by fostering a reflective approach to life. This will be achieved within the context of a growing understanding of the experiences, attitudes, beliefs and religious practices of humanity and a shared commitment of the whole school community to Values Education.

As a Church of England Voluntary Controlled School, we approach RE in a way that will not only introduce the children to an understanding of the nature of Christian beliefs and practices but will

also provide the children opportunities to know about, understand and respond to the important and ultimate questions of life. The children will be encouraged to explore how individuals and communities make meaning and sense of their lives through the major religions of the world. RE is taught in such a way that it inspires the pupils to explore, develop and affirm their own faith and values and have respect for the faith, beliefs and values of others. Opportunities will also be provided for the children to learn about people who have no faith.

Subject Specific Aims

At Silsoe VC Lower School, RE supports and strengthens the vision, ethos and values which are at the heart of what we aim to do in every aspect of school life. The importance placed on the development of the whole child spiritually, morally, socially, culturally and intellectually is reflected in the RE curriculum.

Specifically RE aims to enable pupils of all abilities and stages of development to:

- Develop knowledge and understanding of Christian beliefs and practices so that they understand the importance of the Bible, the role of the church and recognise that for Christians their faith provides a way of interpreting life and its meaning.
- Develop knowledge and understanding of the beliefs and practices of some of the other principal religions in Britain such as Sikhism, Judaism, Islam and Buddhism.
- Understand how belief may impact on culture, relationships, values and lifestyle.
- Understand how belief can be expressed in a variety of different ways including art, dance, music, ritual celebration and in different cultural settings.
- Develop spiritually, morally, culturally and socially by helping them to reflect upon personal feelings, responses and relationships.
- Explore ways in which religious values and teachings have an impact on the actions and decisions for people of different faiths.
- Be supported in their own search for meaning and purpose in life.
- Develop a sense of awe, wonder and mystery.
- Explore the concepts of love, forgiveness and sacrifice.
- Develop skills of reflection, empathy, communication, analysis, investigation, interpretation, evaluation and synthesis.
- Develop attitudes of respect, sensitivity, open-mindedness and self-esteem.
- Develop a positive attitude towards living in a society of diverse religions by appreciating differences and valuing diversity.

Teaching and Learning

We work to the Agreed Syllabus developed by RE Today Services and this is licensed for use in the schools in Bedford Borough, Central Bedfordshire and Luton for 2018-2023. The RE leader has created a scheme of work for all year groups to follow this syllabus. Our scheme of work details which units are taught in each age group from Reception to Year Four for each half term. Each of these units link to a threefold aim.

Our curriculum for RE aims to ensure that all pupils can do the following:

Make sense of a range of religious and non-religious beliefs, so that they can:

- identify, describe, explain and analyse beliefs and concepts in the context of living religions, using appropriate vocabulary
- explain how and why these beliefs are understood in different ways, by individuals and within communities
- recognise how and why sources of authority (e.g. texts, teachings, traditions, leaders) are used, expressed and interpreted in different ways, developing skills of interpretation

Understand the impact and significance of religious and non-religious beliefs, so that they can:

- examine and explain how and why people express their beliefs in diverse ways
- recognise and account for ways in which people put their beliefs into action in diverse ways, in their everyday lives, within their communities and in the wider world
- appreciate and appraise the significance of different ways of life and ways of expressing meaning

Make connections between religious and non-religious beliefs, concepts, practices and ideas studied, so that they can:

- evaluate, reflect on and enquire into key concepts and questions studied, responding thoughtfully and creatively, giving good reasons for their responses
- challenge the ideas they study, and consider how these ideas might challenge their own thinking, articulating beliefs, values and commitments clearly in response
- discern possible connections between the ideas studied and their own ways of understanding the world, expressing their critical responses and personal reflections with increasing clarity and understanding

In addition to our scheme of work, RE in our school may also be taught either discreetly or as part of a cross curricular approach e.g. through PHSE, History, Geography, Art or through a focus RE or Values day or during a special festival such as Christmas or Easter.

The curriculum and organisation of the school must allow each pupil to learn at a pace that is appropriate for them. In the same way that we support less-able pupils, we also ensure highly skilled pupils are given the opportunity to study subjects to a greater depth using their curriculum knowledge to solve problems and investigate possibilities.

Collective Worship

As we are a Voluntary Controlled Church of England School our daily act of collective worship is viewed as an integral and important part of school life. It is a time where we come together as a school to share the teachings of the Bible and to celebrate our achievements. This daily act of worship is based on promoting the Christian Values which permeate the ethos of our school. The contributions of staff, pupils, church clergy and other visitors are highly valued. Although collective worship is separate to the teaching of RE, strands of collective worship are often used to enhance our RE curriculum. (See Collective Worship Policy.)

Inclusion

Our whole school inclusion, English as an Additional Language (EAL) and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) policies apply to RE.

Teachers are aware that children who have barriers to learning in other areas may have a strong interest in and aptitude for RE. All children will be encouraged to progress to their full potential and a variety of teaching methods (e.g. use of art, drama or computing) will be employed to ensure that this is possible.

Children who are highly skilled in RE are given opportunities to demonstrate and develop their strengths.

We understand that some pupils may have a positive and deep experience of religion from their lives outside of school. These experiences will be valued.

Classroom Display

Every classroom in our school has a reflection area where the children are encouraged to ponder, reflect and pray. Class teachers may also display work/artefacts/resources from the class's current RE topic. The children are encouraged to write their own prayers for worship and these are shared as and when this is appropriate. Our school Values are also displayed in each classroom and are referred to as part of our everyday learning not just in RE lessons.

Resources

A variety of stimulating resources will be used to enhance our RE teaching. We will use artefacts from different faiths, books, music, posters, DVDs and the internet. RE resources are stored centrally in the library learning wall and are available for all members of staff to use. Available resources and suggested website links are included within our scheme of work. Visits to places of worship and other related RE venues are also encouraged and these visits help to develop the pupils understanding of the role that religion plays in the community.

Assessment

Assessment of RE will be ongoing and will be part of normal classroom activity. The class teacher will assess what pupils know about religion, what their attitudes are to religion and how well they are able to express their own views and feelings towards other religions. Assessment opportunities will be identified in lesson planning. Examples of work produced, videos and photographs will also be kept as evidence towards assessment. Assessment will be shared with the pupils via marking comments or oral feedback and will also be reported to parents in each pupil's end of year report.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The RE subject leader and the head teacher are responsible for monitoring the standards of the children's work and the quality of teaching in RE. They are also responsible for supporting colleagues in the teaching of RE, for being informed about current developments in the subject, and for providing a strategic lead and direction for the subject. The RE leader will attend regular training and professional development and will organise INSET and training for other members of staff when necessary. RE is included as an area on the School development Plan and this clearly outlines any areas for further development.

Review

This policy will be reviewed every three years in the light of current legislation, identified good practice and the Agreed Syllabus guidance.